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SUBJECT: HORN OF AFRICA, STATE - USAID HUMANITARIAN UPDATE

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REF: STATE 27057

1. Summary:

This is the first cable in response to reftel request for bi-weekly reports on the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa. It is formatted according to reftel guidelines. USAID Missions in Ethiopia and Djibouti contributed to this report.

A regional humanitarian crisis in Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia, exacerbated by the failure of the short rains, has developed into a full-blown emergency. Pastoralist livelihoods across the region are severely threatened as livestock, the basis of their food security system, are dying in unprecedented numbers due to lack of water, forage and pasture. Significant numbers of marginal agricultural and agro-pastoralist communities living in the arid and semi-arid areas of all four countries are also affected. The situation is exacerbated by limited purchasing power, political marginalization, conflict over natural resources (including water) and limited livelihood options. Normal coping mechanisms have been exhausted and pre-famine indicators have been reported, including rising malnutrition rates, irregular high livestock mortality, confused migration, rural exodus to urban centers and concentration at permanent water points.

Since drought in this area is recurrent, historically requiring repeated emergency interventions, donors and governments are increasingly seeking solutions that decrease the vulnerability and increase resiliency of

people and systems in this region. A regional approach to address this crisis is desirable to strengthen and augment in-country efforts, address trans-boundary issues and mitigate conflict issues across borders. USAID has formed a regional Pastoralist Working Group, which serves as an internal think tank to inform USAID's approach to long-term response to the drought in the region.

Country summaries:

a. Kenya Summary: The northern and eastern pastoral districts are facing an emergency situation -- overall, about 3.5 million people require emergency humanitarian assistance in the next 12 months. Malnutrition rates are rising with a GAM of 18-30% in the worst affected districts. Cattle and sheep mortality is estimated at 33% and expected to rise as the dry season advances. Livestock prices have dipped by 30-60%. Most pastoralist coping strategies are exhausted and households are using distress strategies. Agropastoral areas in the south and coastal areas are also highly food insecure due to crop failure. In Lake Basin areas HIV/AIDS is exacerbating food insecurity and large numbers of orphans and vulnerable children exist. AmEmbassy Nairobi has formed an Interagency Task Force for Kenya and Somalia which met for the first time on February 127. Additional information to be provided septel.

b. Ethiopia Summary: The humanitarian situation in the Somali region and in the Borena zone of the Oromia region continues to deteriorate, as the region progresses further into the dry season (Jan-Mar). The response from the UN, donors, and NGOs has been accelerating to meet the needs of the region, but gaps remain. USAID Ethiopia is focusing on filling the most critical gaps through water and health

programs.

c. Somalia Summary: An estimated 1.7 million people in the North, central and Southern Regions of Somalia are facing conditions of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis or Humanitarian Emergency at least until June 2006, and combined with 380,000 IDPS the total number of people in need of assistance throughout the country is 2.1 million people. The crisis is especially severe in the Southern regions of Somalia, where an estimated 1.4 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Somalia is experiencing crop failure; considerable livestock deaths, rapidly increasing cereal prices, falling livestock prices, abnormal population movements and extreme shortages of and limited access to water and food.

d. Djibouti Summary: Recent showers have brought some improvement to the humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the country. Livestock mortality has been reported throughout pastoral communities.

12. Humanitarian Access/Security Incidents:

a. Regional: Governments, humanitarian organizations and donors have mobilized emergency humanitarian assistance in all four countries. Support includes food aid, emergency water trucking, livestock feed provision de-stocking, veterinary and human medicines provision. Somalia continues to be a challenge for both relief and development operations.

Food insecurity is intensified by conflict, whose underlying cause is often competition over scarce resources. Based on field assessment reports and partners working in the drought-affected pastoralist areas, there are signs that the current drought has exacerbated conflict in the area.

Tensions between pastoralists are heightened due to the regional nature of the crisis as it affects transboundary migration (one of their traditional coping strategies)

among the countries of Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. In their search for water and pasture to keep animals alive, pastoralists are encroaching onto agricultural lands in search of grazing. This is affecting farmers land preparation activities for the March/April planting season. Cases of cross-border raids have been reported along the Ethiopia/Kenya, Sudan/Kenya and Somalia/Ethiopia borders. The following security incidents have occurred, by country:

b. Kenya: Following clashes, pastoralists from Wajir District who had migrated to Isiolo lost their eight people and 600 animals. Over eight incidents of highway banditry have been reported over the last month. The Isiolo/Marsabit/Moyale road and Wajir/Mandera road have witnessed increased banditry attacks. On the other hand, reports indicate that inter-clan conflicts in general have reduced due to the severity of the drought that left the people weak and resources completely depleted.

c. Ethiopia: The GOEs Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Agency (DPPA) continues daily dispatches of food for some 1.5 million people in Somali Region, and some 155,000 in Borena zone of Oromiya Region. The transport capacity for deliveries of relief food is limited. In January, the

total food dispatched was only 30% of the target amount for Somali region. In order to increase the dispatch rate, DPPA has engaged their emergency transport fleet and the Road Transport Authority is coordinating the commercial transport fleet for priority loads to the drought-affected areas. For food dispatches to Somali Region, DPPA has now taken additional measures in order to ensure delivery of relief food to the intended beneficiaries. These measures include regular radio broadcasts informing beneficiaries of food allocations and their entitlements, deployment of DPPA monitoring teams to the worst drought-affected areas, deployment of military convoys to follow trucks carrying relief food to particular "hotspot" areas, and the establishment of committees at woreda level to control the receipt of food. WFP is also increasing its monitoring capacity in the areas, through hiring of new food aid monitors and field assistants.

The measles response led by UNICEF with the Ministry of Health (MOH) has many gaps, making coverage extremely inadequate. The already late campaign will be affected by insecurity in some parts of the Somali Region. The campaign is also hindered in pastoralist areas by the lack of capacity of the MOH, and by the difficulties in reaching remote and mobile people. NGO involvement in the past has helped to secure much better coverage rates for vaccination campaigns.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has reported two of their vehicles were hijacked by the Sheikash clan while attempting to deliver food to 4000 displaced families in East Imi. The hijacking was not done at gunpoint, and the ICRC does not consider this a noteworthy security incident. The remainder of the ICRC trucks continued without incident. GOAL has cancelled a nutritional assessment in Deghabur Zone of Somali Region after frequent stops by armed gunmen, and fear of Islamic fundamentalists. Save the Children UK confirmed that they have withdrawn from food distribution to Fik Zone in Somali Region after the burning of two food aid trucks by armed gunmen a few weeks ago (the trucks were owned by highland Ethiopians.)

d. Somalia: Fighting erupted in Mogadishu starting Feb 18 and lasting several days between armed militia backed by business groups and those backed by the Islamic courts. Over 33 persons were killed, 150 wounded, and several thousand displaced. Fighting was reportedly intense including the use of rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machineguns, small caliber guns and mortar shells. The fighting did not disrupt deliveries to the Merka and El Maan ports which are utilized for food aid deliveries.

Three persons were killed on Feb 27 outside the Parliament building in the autonomous Puntland area of Somalia. The attack pitted militia forces loyal to one government minister against security forces guarding the Parliament building. Another vessel (a traditional dhow) was reported hijacked on Feb 27 with 25 crew members aboard.

e. Djibouti: WFP EMOP programs currently carry a caseload of around 47,500 beneficiaries. Due to the late arrival of food shipments, the operation has been extended for 3 months and will end in March 2006. WFP has so far distributed about 2,600 MT of mixed commodities over a three-phase distribution. However, there is a shortfall of around 1,447 MT, starting from January, and there are no

confirmed pledges to cover this gap. September and October food distribution made possible through with loans from other programs. There were no distributions in November, and distributions for December and January were combined. It is possible that distributions will be planned for March depending on confirmed pledges. As the situation is deteriorated by the impact of the current drought prevailing in the region, WFP is planning to extend the current EMOP up to the end of the year according to findings from a government led multi-agency mission scheduled at the end of January.

13. Political/Diplomatic Issues:

a. Kenya: The food crisis in marginal agricultural and Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASAL) of Kenya is clearly much deeper than Emergency. It is rather a fundamentally chronic poverty problem, necessitating strategies and policy reorientation to address the root causes of food insecurity. Both the Government of Kenya (GOK) and donors are taking this crisis as an opportunity to improve understanding of the factors underlying repeated food crisis in the country and identifying new approaches to breaking the cycle of relief dependency.

b. Ethiopia: The joint REDSO/USAID Ethiopia conflict assessment has been postponed to early April.

c. Somalia: On Feb 27, Somalias interim President opened the first ever Parliament meeting held inside Somalia in the Southern Somalia town of Baidoa. This meeting brings together feuding factions of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) who are split between the town of Jowhar and Mogadishu.

d. Djibouti: Reliable sources report the congregation of people in isolated areas around military posts in search of food and water. The Government of Djibouti has launched an appeal for humanitarian assistance.

4.Action/Response to humanitarian; development conflict mitigation, political/diplomatic etc. programs):
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a. Kenya: USAID/Kenya in partnership with its implementing partners has embarked on various interventions to prevent the situation from escalating into a complex humanitarian crisis. Among others, conflict interventions focus on increasing dialogue between communities to help each other in times of disaster. This effort has led to agreements being brokered on how to share the remaining pastures and water. In one district (Mandera), private borehole owners have also been encouraged to share water with the affected communities. Similarly, local partners have set up a rapid response team that will give direction and advice on areas of focus and interventions. This set up will enable more frequent dialogue between communities as a means to diffuse tension and devise more appropriate resource sharing

mechanisms.

USAID/Kenya will continue to provide various short-term and long-term assistance that will enable better understanding of the linkages between drought and conflict in Kenya which could lead to enhanced preventive strategies.

b. Ethiopia: UNICEF has agreed to use NGOs to assist in their measles campaign, which seems to have worked well in Zones 1 and 5 in Afar (and worked well in the 2002-03 emergency vaccination campaign in Afar and Somali). However, there are worries about high numbers of deaths already from measles (200 reported from Gewane in Afar, an area not yet covered by the emergency vaccination), as well as the highly vulnerable state of malnourished children in the most drought affected areas. USAID is continuing to monitor the implementation of the vaccination campaign and is recommending inclusion of NGOs in the pastoralist areas to help ensure effective coverage.

c. Somalia: USAID/FFP has funded expanded food aid distributions in the most affected areas by both the World Food Program (WFP) and CARE International. In total the two agencies have received over \$59 million (\$33,173,000 to WFP and \$26,211,800 to CARE) in FY 06 to cover emergency food needs through July 2006. In addition, CARE is utilizing 11,927 MTs of carry-over commodities from FY 05 valued at approximately \$7.8 towards the crisis. Should rains fail as currently forecast, needs will only expand as more household become destitute and coping strategies reach their breaking point.

USAID/REDSO is expanding its Peace in East and Central Africa (PEACE) Program, complementing its current cross-border peacebuilding program in Mandera/Gedo Regions on the Somalia/Kenya border with additional activities into Wajir, Kenya and Lower Juba, Somalia. Support will include local organizations in Afmadow and Bardeera districts in Somalia. The initiative will promote joint economic and livelihoods development by peaceful means; facilitate practical problem-solving partnerships between local government and cross border community organizations to share basic services, and strengthen community structures and mechanisms for the management of cross border conflict and peace building.

The lack of a functioning central government and continued insecurity limits the type of programming that can be undertaken as well as the ability of organizations to access areas for programming.

Current funding for FEWS/Somalia, which is based in Nairobi, is insufficient. Due to declining budgets for USAID/Somalia programs which in the past has supplemented the FEWS/Somalia budget, travel is limited to one trip per month and funding for 24 field monitors in Somalia, who measure market prices and rainfall data, will run out at the end of March. FEWS/Somalia has prepared a supplemental funding request valued at approximately \$250,000 to enable additional travel, reporting and analysis, and funding for the Somalia field monitors but funding has not been identified yet. [Note: It is ironic that the very entity charged with being a famine early warning system is facing reductions at a time when Somalia is exhibiting early warning signs of famine, USG travel into Somalia is restricted, and the USG is dramatically increasing emergency funding levels. End Note]

15. Donor Response Update:

a. Regional: The USAID Pastoralist Working Group is preparing a concept paper to apply for Famine Funds. The proposed regional activity would complement and strengthen

bilateral efforts and tackle some of the key transboundary issues to improve resiliency of the predominantly pastoralist populations in the region.

b. Kenya: Based on the January interagency food security assessment, the GOK appealed for international assistance for approximately 395,000 mt emergency foods valued at Dols.221.5 million to meet immediate relief needs of 3.5 million drought-affected people throughout Kenya. In addition, Dols.21.7 million is required in non-food assistance.

Existing food aid pipeline (including 40,000 mt of the GOKs recent pledge of 60,000 mt and USG additional contribution of 10,000 mt) will not go beyond end April 2006. According to the World Food Program, 25 to 30,000 mt of monthly ration is required to address immediate food needs of 3.5 million people through March 2007. Shortly after the GOKs appeal for international assistance on February 8, 2006, a joint GOK/WFP press statement was issued, reiterating the need for donors immediate response to the appeal to respond to the urgent relief needs of approximately 3.5 million people.

In FY 2006, the USG provided 12,000 mt of wheat, which was swapped for 14,400 mt of locally provided maize, and an additional 10,000 mt in assorted commodities. USG is also considering additional contributions to avert a situation in which huge pipeline break occurs in the midst of immediate and significant needs. In addition, the USG, through OFDA, is planning to contribute Dols.1.5 towards the non-food sector through UNICEF and various NGOs.

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More recent non-USG contributions include Euro 5 million from EU/ECHO, GBP one million from the UK, Euro one million from France, Euro one million from Ireland, Dols.500,000 from Italy and Dols.200,000 from Turkey. Additional contributions are also expected from other donors.

WFP Executive Director, James Morris, is in Kenya the week of February 27, 2006. On March 5, 2006 Ambassador Bellamy will host a lunch for other Chiefs of Mission and GOK officials so that James Morris can provide an update on the East Africa drought and make a personal request for a timely response to the current appeal from the international community.

c. Ethiopia: The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) has been encouraging DPPA to take the lead on the response coordination. In parallel, UNOCHA has been hosting donor and partner meetings bi-weekly to make sure there is no gap in information sharing. USAID Ethiopia has also been meeting with partners to keep abreast of the situation and to adjust response plans as necessary.

UNOCHA is creating a Humanitarian Trust Fund for Ethiopia, that will be used to respond to the drought emergency this year, and as an early slush fund for future emergencies. The current request by OCHA is USD 12.9 million, with almost half focused on health and nutrition as UNICEF

implements a massive measles campaign. The UKs Department for International Development (DFID) has committed GBP 4 million to the fund with the EU appearing to be covering the rest (although no firm commitment has been made). Furthermore, Sweden has committed USD 3 million and Norway USD 680,000 to UNICEF, with Belgium committing USD 300,000 to FAO for livestock health and veterinary drugs.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) had been on the sidelines as they reevaluated direct budget support to the GOE and formulated policy through their recent elections at home. CIDA just last week reentered the fray by committing USD17 million to Ethiopia this year

for drought response and country-wide health. CIDA has not yet announced how the money will be divided between these two responses.

ICRC has focused on water tankering to Afder zone, utilizing 9 water tankers supporting 15 locations and additional points along the road. ICRC has been providing food for internally displaced populations in East Imi, and has made a limited response in improving access to human health and animal health care in Afder and Gode zones. WHO recently reported that the Austrian Development Agency donated 500,000 Euro to support the polio eradication program in Somali Region. The campaign, which plans to cover an estimated 900,000 children under five, was conducted in the 53 woredas including bordering areas, from 20-23 February. The region is considered to be at high risk of importing the polio virus as it borders East Hararge in Oromiya Region, where the three most recently confirmed wild polio virus cases were identified and due to the outbreak of the disease in neighboring Somalia.

d. Somalia: Recent commitments to WFPs Emergency Operation include the EU (\$6 million); DFID (\$4.5 million); Ireland (\$1.2 million), and Austria (\$200,000).

e. Djibouti: WFP EMOP programs currently carry a caseload of around 47,500 beneficiaries. Due to the late arrival of food shipments, the operation has been extended for 3 months and will end in March 2006. WFP has so far distributed about 2,600 MT of mixed commodities over a three-phase distribution. However, there is a shortfall of around 1,447 MT, starting from January, and there are no confirmed pledges to cover this gap.

16. FEWS/FSAU Update:

a. Livestock:

Kenya: Two years of successive drought has had an enormous detrimental impact on the livelihoods and household food security of the region, and has precipitated a growing chronic food security crisis. The failure of short-rains in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia resulted in severely depleted pasture, browse and water. Livestock mortality is high in Kenya, for example, it ranges between 5 percent among camels to 33 percent among cattle and sheep. Many pastoralists depend on moving their livestock long distances and across national borders to find forage and water. Cattle and sheep are too weak to trek long distances and many have died. The trekking distances for livestock has extended beyond 20 miles, with watering intervals ranging between two days for goats and up to five days for camels. As conditions worsen in the entire pastoral livelihood zone, migration options are increasingly limited and conflict over resources is likely to heighten in scale and severity.

Ethiopia: There are reports of disease outbreaks, particularly in the Afder and Liben zones of the Somali region. UNOCHA reports that over 80,000 livestock have died in these two zones alone. Vaccination and treatment campaigns have reached over 700,000 animals to combat the spread of diseases. But, as the rains start, it is anticipated that many emaciated animals will die when they get wet and cold so death tolls will certainly increase significantly.

USAID Ethiopia, through the Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative, has designated USD 2 million for emergency destocking. Over the next month, PLI partners are planning on destocking over 130,000 animals, mainly goats, sheep, and camels. Partners are also supplying emergency feed, water, vaccinations, and disease treatments.

Somalia: Livestock body conditions, production and reproduction throughout most of the South extremely poor and severely stressed due to limited water and pasture. Cattle, the main livestock species in Gode, Juba Valley and parts of Bay and Bakool regions are the hardest hit by the

drought and their survival over the current dry season (January-April) is precarious at best. It is estimated that 20-30% of the cattle have already died in Gedo and parts of Juba Valley due to the lack of water, pasture and drought related diseases. Preliminary estimates are that upwards to 80% of the cattle in Gedo could perish by April, before the next rains are expected. Competition over rangeland resources and market opportunities is increasing resource based conflicts between farmers and herders. The market value of livestock, especially cattle, has plummeted and will continue to fall.

Djibouti: There were no rains recorded in December. The volume of the Heys/Dada rains to date range from below normal to far below normal. Grazing areas in all pastoral zones currently face a serious water deficit. All water catchments are practically dry. This situation has led to irregular movement of livestock, and the majority of the remaining weakened herds are currently concentrated around permanent water points. An extensive water tankering scheme needs to be implemented soon. Reports indicate high incidence rates of water borne diseases, contributing to high livestock mortality throughout the pastoral zones.

b. Market Prices/terms of trade:

Kenya: Livestock prices have declined by margins ranging between 30-60 percent in Kenya. The most significant prices decline is noted among cattle. Low livestock prices, attributed to a glut in supply, have compounded the already low purchasing capacity. In addition, a significant proportion of the livestock is unsellable due to poor body condition.

Cereal prices in pastoral areas are over 50 percent higher than in markets outside the pastoral areas, further underlining the pressure on pastoralists terms of trade. Pastoralists terms of trade are compromised further by crop failure experienced across the cropping livelihood zones which have pushed up cereal prices.

Ethiopia: The market price in Jijiga market has remained stable, despite the low demand in the market. For example

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364 sheep were offered, but only 71 were sold. Because of the low demand, the price of shoats has decreased slightly, but remains higher than other regions. Information gathered in Afder zone reveals that greater than 75% of the animals put up for sale have been sold, but at prices that were the lowest surveyed. Similarly, Liben zone had a very high sell rate but instead with the highest prices surveyed. In all regions, prices are decreasing as animals become leaner.

c. Rainfall/forecasting:

Kenya: According to FEWS/NET, Kenya experiences mild cyclical drought events approximately every 3 - 5 years with more severe dry periods roughly in ten-year cycles. Since 1998, successive poor rainy seasons have limited the ability of poor households in parts of the ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Lands) to recover lost assets and employ traditional coping mechanisms. An interagency food security assessment conducted between January 9 - 31, 2006 in Kenya confirmed that short-rains season totally failed in much of eastern and northern pastoralist areas of Kenya. Where rains occurred, they began late, were poorly distributed, and ended early.

The crises also affected significant number of marginal agricultural and agro-pastoralist communities living in Kenyas arid and semi arid areas. For instance, out of the 3 million persons targeted for general food distributions, approximately 2 million are classified as marginal crop producers and agro-pastoralists. The drought is expected to persist through the next month and a half, until the onset of the long-rains season in early April, in pastoralist districts.

A bi-annual climate outlook forum that brings together a diverse group of scientists and practitioners is taking place in Nairobi, Kenya from March 1 - 3, 2006. The main objective of the forum is to develop a consensus climate outlook for the March to May 2006 rainfall season, and the associated food security outlook for the Greater Horn of Africa. The forum will also discuss the potential impacts of the consensus climate outlook on other socio-economic sectors including water resources and hydropower management and health among others sectors.

Ethiopia: The belg rains have started in some of the highland areas of Ethiopia, which is promising as they have arrived on time. Current weather forecasts suggest, however, that the belg/gu rains have a 45 percent chance of being below normal in the east, where they are desperately needed. Rains have already been reported twice in Borena zone, which is promising. USAID will continue to monitor the performance of the rains and assess their impact on the humanitarian crisis in the region.

Somalia: The water situation in Southern Somalia is desperate. Most open water sources have dried up and the bulk of deep well boreholes are non-functioning. Oxfam reports that seven people have died from dehydration since mid-January and that households are surviving on the equivalent of three glass of water per person per day for drinking, cooking, and washing. Even for this amount, some household are walking up to 45 miles to access water in 104 degree Fahrenheit heat. Reportedly, some households are drinking their own urine to survive. Further exacerbating

an already dire situation are reports from both FEWS and FSAU that the Shabelle river which runs through Southern Somalia is at risk to dry up completely.

Djibouti: Rains in February, although two weeks late have essentially alleviated the threat in Eastern Djibouti. Rains in Western Djibouti are not normally expected until March, so the outcome is still pending.

17. CONCLUSION

Governments, humanitarian organizations and donors have mobilized emergency humanitarian assistance in all four countries. Support includes food aid, emergency water trucking, livestock feed provision, de-stocking, and veterinary and human medicines provision. However, the assistance is reportedly insufficient to stop the deteriorating situation. Regional interventions are planned to complement bilateral efforts and address cross-border issues.

The priority should be to save human lives as well as lives of reproductive, milking and pack animals. More urgent and appropriate assistance is needed. Additionally, contingency plans need to be drawn in the event that the expected long rains are either below normal or poor in these areas. USG and donors are planning for longer-term interventions to address the recurrent livelihood failure sparked by recurrent drought.

BELLAMY